

Message Text

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PAGE 01 REYKJA 00842 271615Z POSS DUPE
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 /057 W
-----054536 290322Z /23

R 271531Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8512
INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
COMICEDEFOR KEFLAVIK IC
CINCLANT NORFOLK VA
CINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
USMISSION USNATO
USICA WASHDC

UNCLAS REYKJAVIK 0842

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IC
SUBJECT: ELECTION RESULTS: LOCAL POST MORTEM

REF: (A) REYKJAVIK 0835 DTG 261603Z JUN 78(NOTAL)
(B) REYKJAVIK 0838 0838 DTG 270928Z JUN 78(NOTAL)

1. PRESS AND AIRWAVES HAVE BEEN FILLED WITH COMMENTS BY POLITICIANS AND "MAN IN THE STREET" OVER JUNE 25 ELECTION RESULTS. AS EXPECTED, CHAIRMEN OF GOVERNING INDEPENDENCE (IP) AND PROGRESSIVE (PP) PARTIES, WHEN QUERIED BY TV AND PRESS FOR THEIR REACTIONS, SAID THEY WERE "DISAPPOINTED". IN OTHER INTERVIEWS, SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC (SDP) AND PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE (PA) SPOKESMEN EXPRESSED ELECTION WITH RESULTS.

2. PRIME MINISTER AND IP CHAIRMAN GEIR HALLGRIMSSON BLAMED PARTY LOSSES ON ECONOMIC MEASURES GOI IMPLEMENTED EARLIER IN YEAR AND SAID GOVERNMENT WAS UNABLE TO MAKE
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PEOPLE UNDERSTAND NEED FOR SUCH ACTION. AS NOTED REF (B), PRIMIN SAID THAT IP WOULD BE WILLING PARTICIPANT IN NEXT GOVERNMENT, BUT ONLY IF COALITION AGREEMENT WOULD NOT INTERFERE WITH MAIN PARTY PRINCIPLES. (FYI: BECAUSE IT STILL CONTROLS BLOC OF 20 OUT OF 60 ALTHING SEATS, IP IS ONLY PARTY IN POSITION TO FORM COALITION WITH ANY ONE OF THREE OTHER PARTIES. END FYI).

3. PP CHAIRMAN OLAFUR JOHANNESSEN DID NOT EXPLAIN LOSSES IN TERMS OF PARTY FAILURES BUT NOTED THAT IT IS NOW UP TO OPPOSITION PARTIES WHO WERE BIG WINNERS IN ELECTION TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY HAVE ANSWERS TO ICELAND'S PROBLEMS. ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT RULE OUT PARTICIPATION BY PP IN NEXT GOVERNMENT, JOHANNESSEN, CURRENTLY MINISTER OF JUSTICE, CONSIDERED IT UNLIKELY, A SENTIMENT THAT HAS BEEN ECHOED BY MANY PROGRESSIVES IN LAST TWO DAYS.

4. BENEDIKT GRONDAL, CHAIRMAN OF SDP, ATTRIBUTED RESULTS TO REVITALIZATION OF PARTY, CHANGES IN PARTY STRUCTURE, AND LARGE NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE FLOCKED TO SOCIAL DEMOCRATS. MASSIVE PARTY GAINS, HE SAID, WERE RESULT OF ICELANDERS SEEKING ALTERNATIVE TO PRESENT GOVERNMENT BUT REJECTING EXTREME OF PA. PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANT FROM USG PERSPECTIVE, GRONDAL REITERATED SDP POLICY (REYKJAVIK 0821 DTG 220958Z JUN 78) THAT PARTY WOULD NOT TRADE NATION'S SECURITY (I.E. MAINTENANCE OF NATO BASE AT KEFLAVIK) FOR PARTICIPATION IN CABINET.

5. PA CHAIRMAN LUDVIK JOSEPPSSON CALLED RESULTS VICTORY FOR PARTIES OF LABOR MOVEMENT. OUTCOME, HE DECLARED, WAS SHARP CRITICISM OF GOI POLICIES. DESPITE FACT PARTY'S GAINS WERE SMALLER THAN THOSE OF SDP IN TERMS OF PERCENTAGE OF VOTES IT ATTRACTED AND ADDITIONAL SEATS
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IT WON, JOSEPPSSON MAINTAINED THAT PA HAD ACHIEVED EVEN GREATER VICTORY. WHEN ASKED ABOUT INTENTIONS OF PARTY IN REGARD TO DISCUSSIONS RE COALITION FORMATION AND BASE ISSUE, CHAIRMAN DECLINED TO SAY WHETHER DEFENSE MATTERS WOULD ENTER INTO SUCH TALKS.
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